

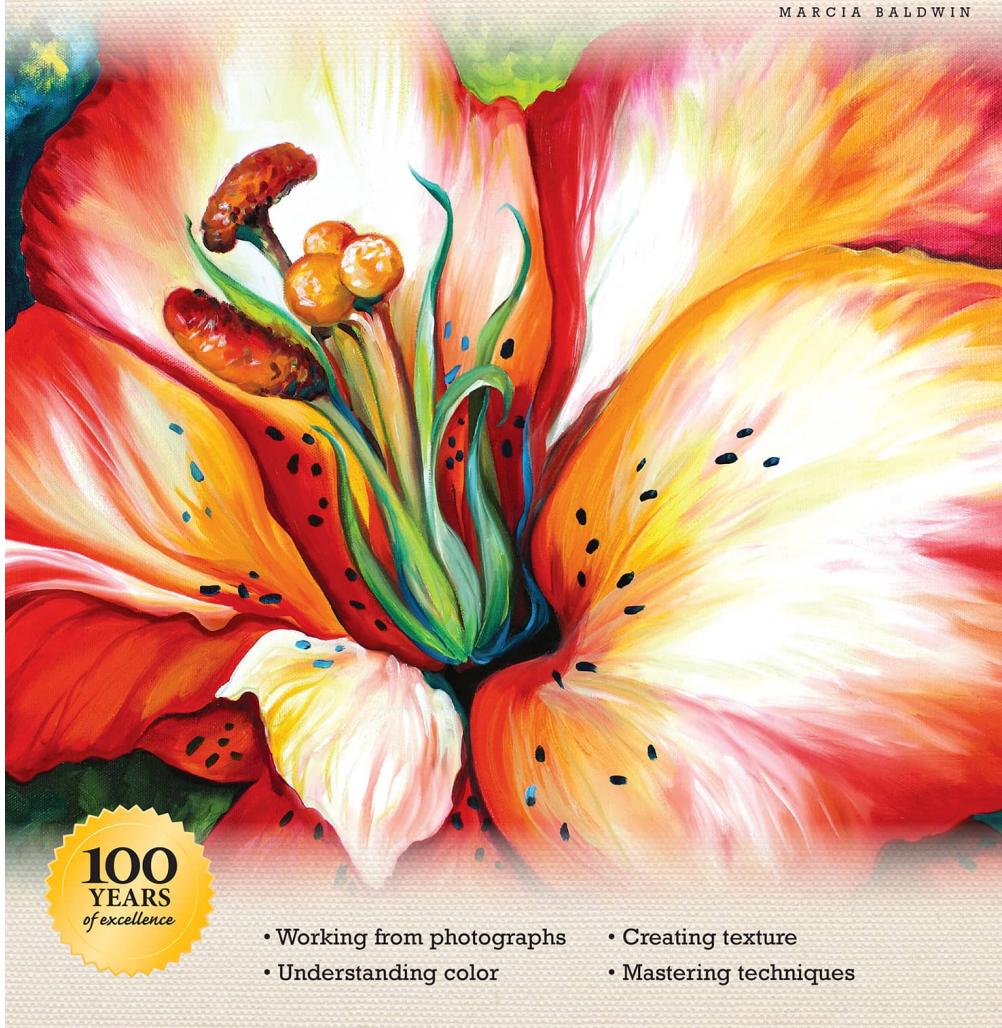
Walter Foster

OIL & ACRYLIC FLOWERS

LEARN TO PAINT STEP BY STEP

40-PAGE
STEP-BY-STEP
PAINTING
BOOK

MARCIABALDWIN



100
YEARS
of excellence

- Working from photographs
- Understanding color
- Creating texture
- Mastering techniques

FLOWERS



Walter Foster

With this book, I hope to demonstrate how the principles and elements of art and design can be explored and experienced when painting flowers in oil and acrylic. Oil paints—and the thrill of applying them from palette to brush to canvas—has captivated and inspired me since I was 12 years old. Over the past 38 years, my style has grown from realistic to contemporary, but the range of tones and hues, color theory, and mixing continues to pique my interest to this day. Every new painting is an adventure from which I learn something new and exciting. I hope my paintings portray the joy and excitement of everyday life.

—*Marcia Baldwin*

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TOOLS & MATERIALS

Oil and acrylic are among the most popular mediums today for their versatility and approachability. All of the projects featured in this book can be rendered using oil and acrylic. I especially love painting in oil, but it's all a matter of personal preference.

Paints

The main difference between oil and acrylic—aside from one being oil-based and the other water-based—is that acrylic dries much faster than oil, making it easier to paint over mistakes. Oil, however, has more pigment and renders richer colors. Both types of paint are available in two grades. “Artist grade” is the highest quality and contains the most pigment, whereas “student grade” is less expensive and contains more filler.



Oil Pastels

Oil pastels, which provide pigment in the form of individual oil crayons, are useful for creating lines, blending colors, and adding texture. You can use oil pastels to “draw” your subject over your underpainting, but you can just as easily use oil paint and a round brush to achieve the same effect.



Paintbrushes

Brushes vary greatly in size, shape, and texture. Natural-hair brushes, as opposed to synthetic, work best for oil painting. There are four main brush shapes: round, filbert, flat, and bright. Round brushes taper to a thin point and are good for detail work and fine lines. Filbert brushes are slightly flattened with long bristles, making them good for blocking in large areas and rounding our forms. Flat brushes can hold a lot of paint and are great for creating corners. Bright brushes are similar to flat brushes, but allow for more control.



TIP

Varnishes are used to protect your painting. Spray-on varnish temporarily sets the paint, and brush-on varnish permanently protects your work.

Palette

Whatever type of palette you choose—glass, wood, plastic, or paper—make sure it is easy to clean and large enough for mixing your colors. Glass is a great surface for mixing paints and is very durable. Palette paper is disposable, so cleanup is simple, and you can always purchase an airtight plastic box (or paint seal) to keep your leftover paint fresh between painting sessions.



Palette Knives

Palette knives are mainly used for mixing colors on your palette, but some can also be used for applying paint to your canvas or creating texture in your work.



Supports

The surface on which you paint is called the “support”—generally canvas or wood. You can stretch canvas yourself, but it’s simpler to purchase prestretched, preprimed canvas (stapled to a frame) or canvas board (canvas glued to cardboard). If you choose to work with wood or any other porous material, apply a primer first to seal the surface so that the oil paints adhere to the support instead of soaking through.



Mediums & Solvents

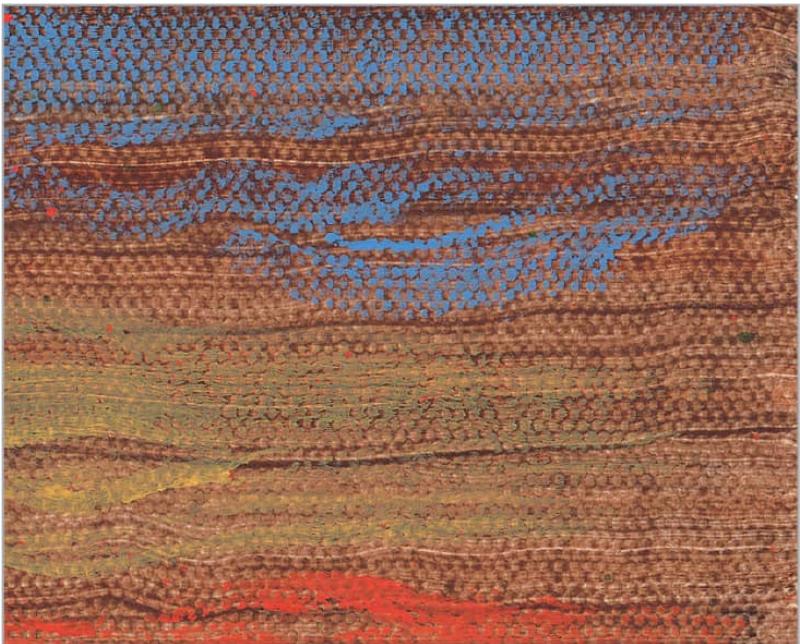
There is a variety of mediums available for paint. Different mediums can be used to thicken or thin paint, speed up drying time, etc. Solvents such as turpentine can also be used to thin oil paint or wipe it from the canvas. You will need turpentine to clean oil paint from your brushes. Once the paint has been removed, you can use brush soap and warm water—never hot—to remove any residual paint. When painting with acrylic, use soap and water to remove residual paint from the brush. Reshape the bristles and lay flat to dry. Never store brushes bristle-side down. Turpentine and mineral spirits are toxic, so take precautions when using these products. Wear gloves and work in a well-ventilated area.

PAINTING TECHNIQUES

There are endless ways to apply and manipulate oil and acrylic paint. Once you get the basics down, you'll be able to decide which techniques work best for each of your subjects. As you paint, it's a good idea to get in the habit of spicing up your art with multiple techniques, which will help keep your painting process from becoming too repetitive or formulaic.



Flat Wash A flat wash is used to quickly cover large areas with solid color. Load a large flat brush with your diluted paint. Tilt the paper as you lightly sweep overlapping, horizontal strokes across the page. Gravity will help blend the strokes together.



Drybrushing To create coarse, irregular strokes, load a brush with paint and wipe off any excess with a paper towel. Then lightly drag the brush over your surface.



Wet-into-Wet Apply one color next to another color that is still wet. Then blend the two colors by lightly stroking over the area where they meet. Use your brush to soften the edge, producing a smooth transition.

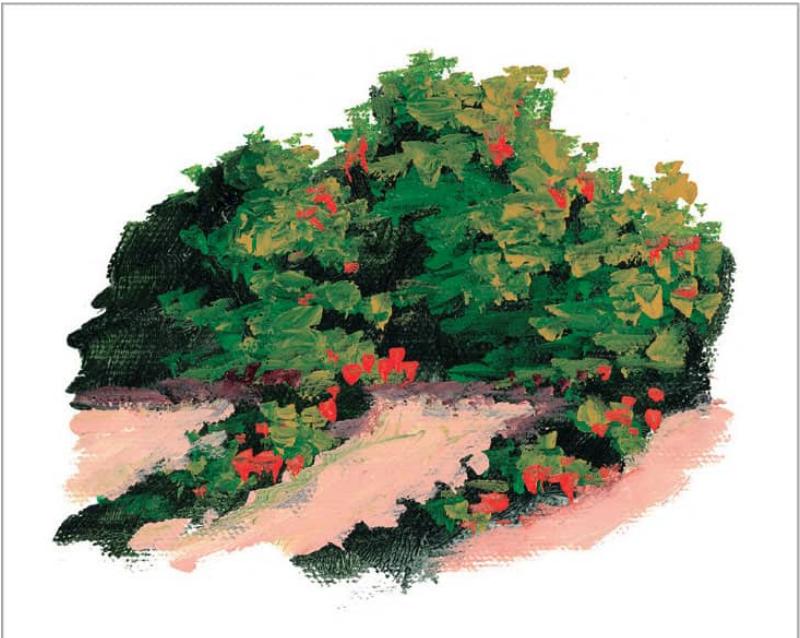


Graded Wash Tilt the support and paint horizontal strokes across the top as you did for a flat wash. But this time, add more water or thinner to your brush before each new stroke. The color will gradually fade out.



Impasto To create this rich, buttery texture, use short, quick strokes to apply very thick paint to your support. Don't overwork the paint—just dab it on so you don't

flatten it out.



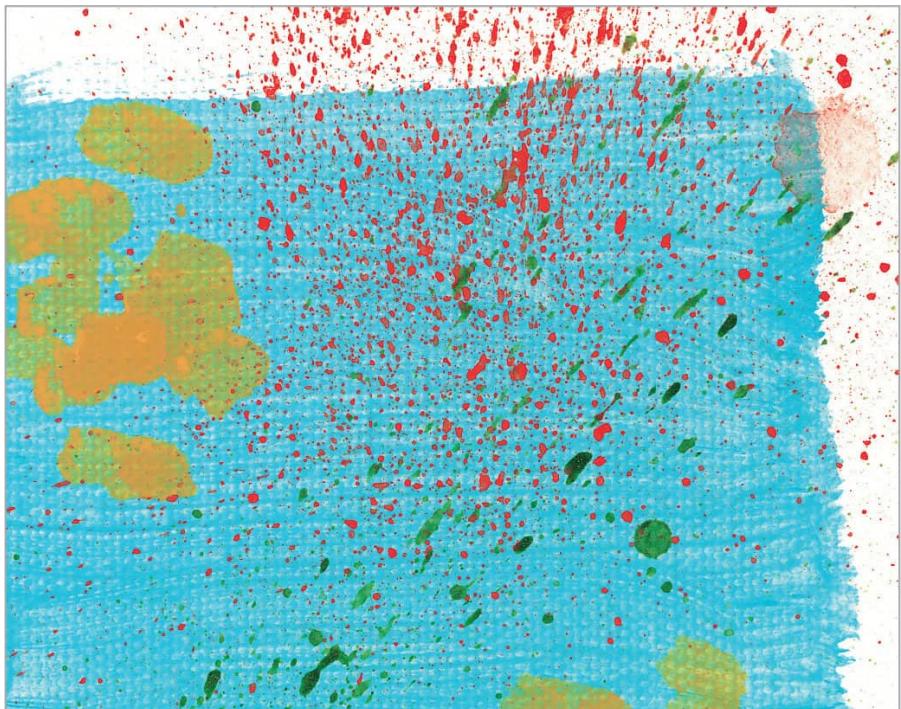
Dabbing For soft dabs of built-up color, generously load the tip of your brush with paint and dot color on in a jabbing motion. Layering several different hues adds fullness and dimension.

TIP

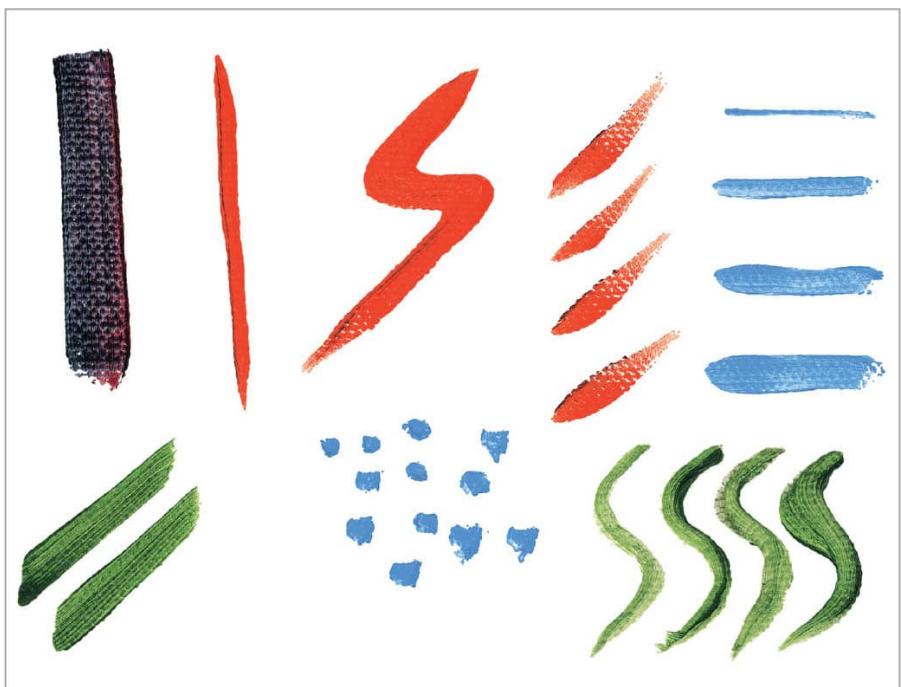
A wash is a thin mixture of paint that has been diluted. For thin oil washes, use turpentine; for thick oil washes, use linseed oil; and for acrylic washes, use water.



Scraping Also called “sgraffito,” scraping is a method used to remove wet paint from the painting surface to reveal lighter values beneath. Use a pointed tool to scrape off wet paint or to “draw” lines in wet paint.



Spattering Load an old toothbrush with diluted paint and run your thumb against the bristles, allowing the paint to spatter onto the paper.



Drawing with the Brush “Drawing” with a brush makes it easy to create crisp edges and small details, such as flowers, leaves, and stems. Use the tip of a round brush to produce long, thin lines, or use a flat brush to produce thicker lines.



Double-Loading Dip half of a brush into one color and dip the other half into a second color. As you stroke, both colors will appear side by side.

PAINTING WITH A KNIFE

With painting knives, you can apply thick textures or render intricate details. Use the side of your knife to apply paint thickly. Use the fine-point tip of your knife for blending and drawing details. Below are some examples of effects you can achieve with a painting knife.

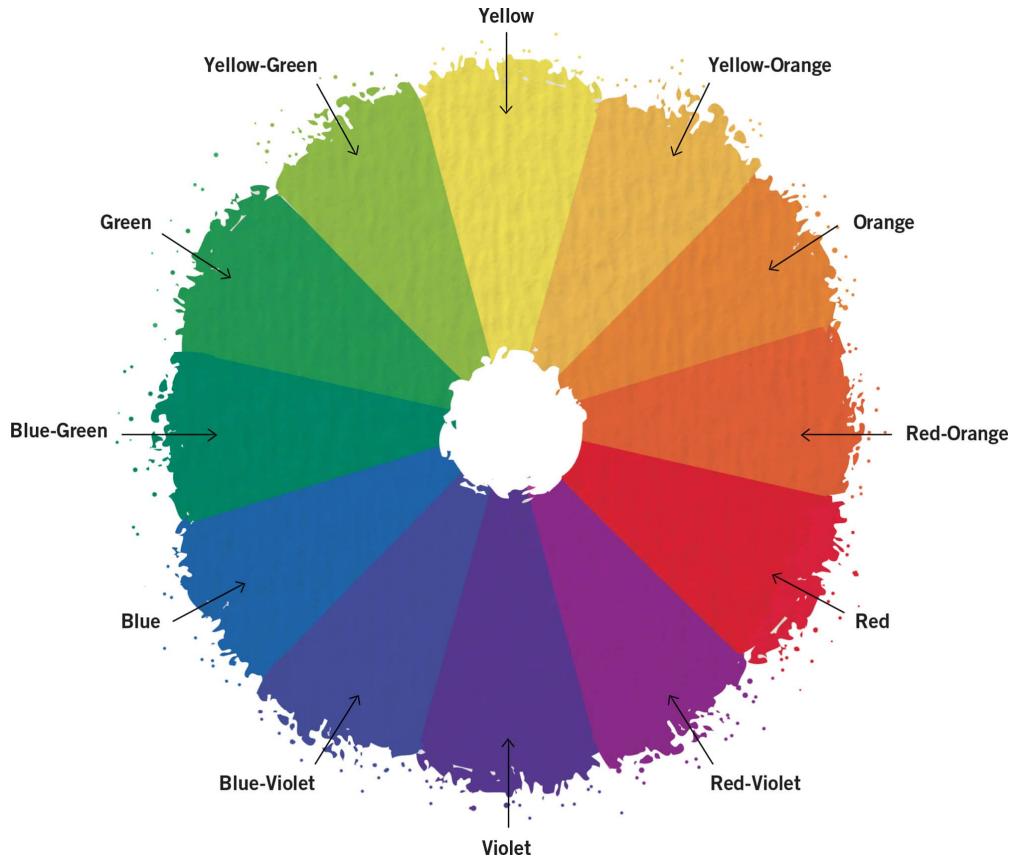


COLOR BASICS

A basic knowledge of color and color relationships is essential in learning how to paint. One of the easiest ways to approach color is by seeing it on a “color wheel,” which is a visual organization of color hues around a circle. Seeing the colors organized in this fashion is helpful for color mixing and choosing color schemes.

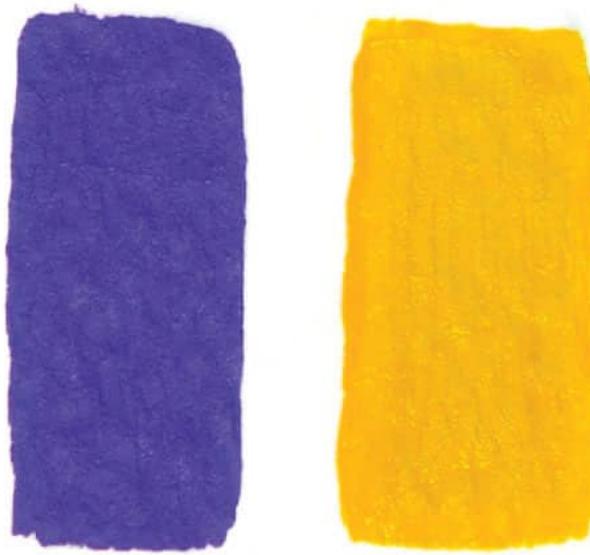
Color Wheel

The color wheel helps us see relationships between primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. Primary colors are blue, red, and yellow. We can create a multitude of other colors by combining blue, red, and yellow in various proportions, but we can't create the three primaries by mixing other colors. Secondary colors include orange, green, and violet. You can create these colors by combining two primaries. Red and yellow make orange, blue and red make violet, and yellow and blue make green. Tertiary colors are created by mixing each primary color with its neighboring secondary color. These colors include red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet.



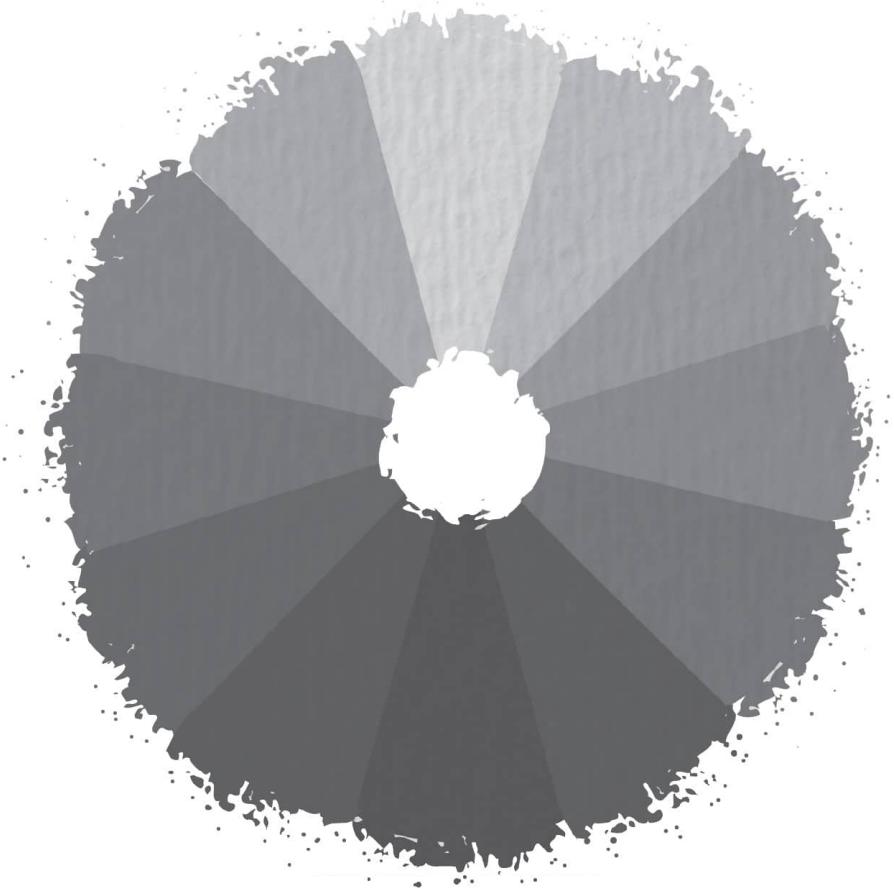
COMPLEMENTARY COLORS

Complements sit opposite each other on the color wheel. For example, red sits opposite green, blue sits opposite orange, and yellow sits opposite purple. These colors are considered opposites in their hues and yield the maximum amount of color contrast possible. When complements are mixed together, they form a dull gray, brown, or neutral color.



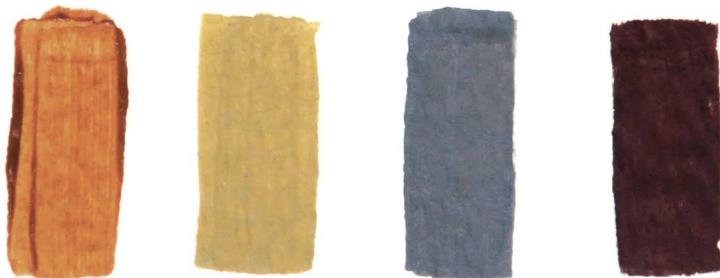
Value

Within each hue, you can achieve a range of values—from dark shades to light tints. Each hue has a value relative to others on the color wheel. For example, yellow has the lightest value and purple has the darkest value. To see this clearly, photograph or scan a color wheel, and use computer-editing software to view it in grayscale. At right is a grayscale version of the color wheel from shown [here](#). You can change the value of any color by adding white or black. See the changes that occur in the pure colors illustrated below, when black or white is added. Adding white to a pure color results in a lighter value tint of that color; adding black results in a darker value shade; and adding gray results in a tone.



NEUTRAL COLORS

Neutral colors are browns and grays, both of which contain all three primary colors in varying proportions. Neutral colors are often dulled with white or black. Artists also use the word “neutralize” to describe the act of dulling a color by adding its complement.



Color Temperature

Color temperature refers to the feeling one gets when viewing a color or set of colors. Generally, yellows, oranges, and reds are considered warm, whereas greens, blues, and purples are considered cool. When used within a work of art, warm colors seem to advance toward the viewer, and cool colors appear to recede into the distance. This dynamic is important to remember when suggesting depth or creating an area of focus.



Cool



Warm

TIP

Some artists begin every painting by mixing a color spectrum on a large palette. To create a color spectrum, squeeze out lots of paint and premixes, and blend their edges together until it represents all of the colors and values that will be in the final painting. The value of the spectrum is that it saves time trying to find the right blend of colors, and the painting does not get muddy.

Color Mixing

Successfully mixing colors is a learned skill—the more you practice, the better you will become. One of the most important things is to train your eye to see the shapes of color in an object—the varying hues, values, tints, tones, and shades. Once you can see them, you can practice mixing them. If you're a beginner, you might want to go outside and mix some of the colors you see in nature at different times of day. Your ability to discern the variations in color under different lighting conditions is one of the keys to successful color mixing. The chart below shows only a portion of the colors that can be made using a basic palette. To practice your mixing skills, create your own chart using colors from your own palette.

Lemon
Yellow

+
White

+ Lemon
Yellow

+ Lemon
Yellow +
White

+ Cadmium
Yellow Light

+ Cadmium
Yellow Light

+ Cadmium
Yellow Lt. +
White

+ Cadmium
Red Light

+ Cadmium
Red Lt. +
White

+ Alizarin
Crimson

+ Alizarin
Crimson +
White

+ Cerulean
Blue

+ Cerulean
Blue +
White

+ Ultramarine
Blue

+ Ultramarine
Blue +
White

+ Burnt
Umber

+ Black

+ Black +
White

Cadmium
Yellow Light

Cadmium
Red Light

Alizarin
Crimson

Cerulean
Blue

Ultramarine
Blue

Burnt
Umber

Black

WORKING FROM PHOTOS

The first stage of any painting starts with inspiration, followed by a plan for rendering a subject. I seek out gardens, floral displays, or photos for ideas when starting a new painting. I play around with compositions in my mind's eye and make sketches to guide me as I work, but I always allow my creativity to flow freely. I took several artistic liberties with this project so that my final artwork was more compelling than my photo reference.



COLOR PALETTE

Oil Colors

crimson • phthalo red rose
phthalo violet • quinacridone rose • sap green
titanium white • yellow green

Oil Pastels

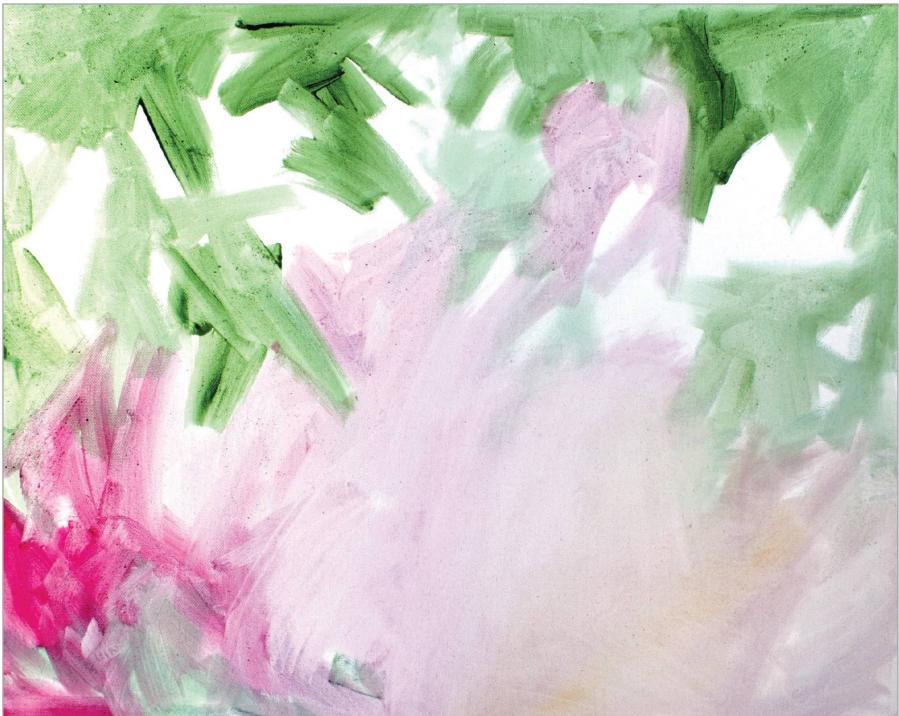
kelly green • red rose • violet or purple

You will also need:

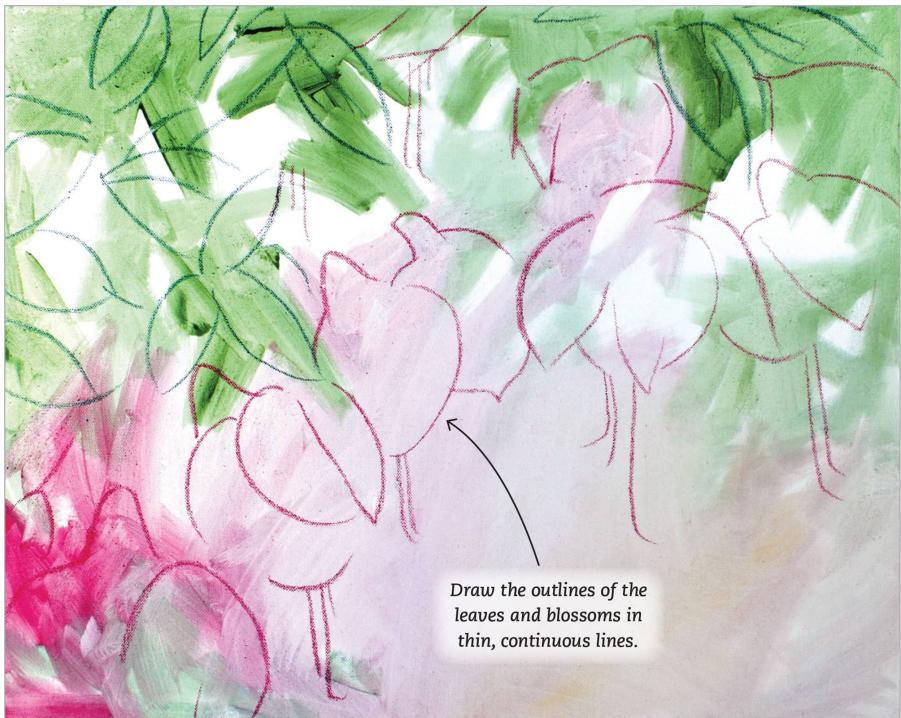
liquin • turpentine



Begin by mixing one part liquin and one part turpentine in a glass jar. (Don't forget to wear gloves!) Set aside a small amount in another lidded jar to use later. (Throughout the book, I will refer to this as your "medium mixture.") To tone your canvas, mix a quarter-size dollop of the medium mixture with an equal size dollop of sap green using a palette knife or large flat brush until you have a transparent hue. You may need to keep adding medium until the paint becomes transparent. Apply the mixture to your entire canvas in loose, quick strokes, emphasizing the areas of foliage.



Apply more of the underpainting with a broad flat brush and loose strokes across the areas of the canvas that will be the fuchsia blossoms. To lighten areas of paint, brush on clear liquin using a broad flat brush. The underpainting creates a wet surface for the steps that follow.



Draw the outlines of the leaves and blossoms in thin, continuous lines.

Use either oil pastel or the tip of a round brush dipped in paint for this step. Don't worry about making mistakes—they can easily be fixed because you are working on a wet surface.

Draw the outlines of the leaves and blossoms in thin, continuous lines.



Always work from darkest to lightest, and be sure to clean your brush before changing colors.

Load a small flat brush with your medium mixture and your paint color. Begin painting in the leaves. Follow this same process with several lighter colors to give the leaves texture and depth.

Always work from darkest to lightest, and be sure to clean your brush before changing colors.

TIP

Using less medium mixture when applying the oil paints will create a thicker, more opaque layer in areas where you want more detail.



Just as you painted the leaves in the previous step, paint the fuchsia blossoms, working from darkest to lightest.

LEAF DETAILS



Layering your greens from darkest to lightest helps give the leaves texture and depth.



Further define and sharpen the leaves and blossoms that you want to have more detail, and blend and soften areas of less focal interest. To sharpen edges, use the side of a soft, flat brush, loaded with paint and less medium than in previous steps. Finally, use titanium white and flat, bold strokes to add highlights where needed.

BLOSSOM DETAILS



Adding titanium white gives the illusion of light reflecting off the blossoms.



Add a bit of titanium white to sharpen some of the blossom edges to give them a clean finish. Then use some titanium white to soften the edges around the foliage.

Finally, using a small round brush, sign and date your finished piece.

TIP

Sharp edges draw the eye's attention to the focal point of your piece. Use a soft flat brush to gently blend and soften edges that move away from the central focal point.

WORKING FROM SKETCHES

I didn't have a reference photo for this project, so I started with a rough sketch of my own creation to help guide me while painting. Don't feel that your painting has to match your sketch precisely, though. Let your creativity take you where it wants for the best outcome.



COLOR PALETTE

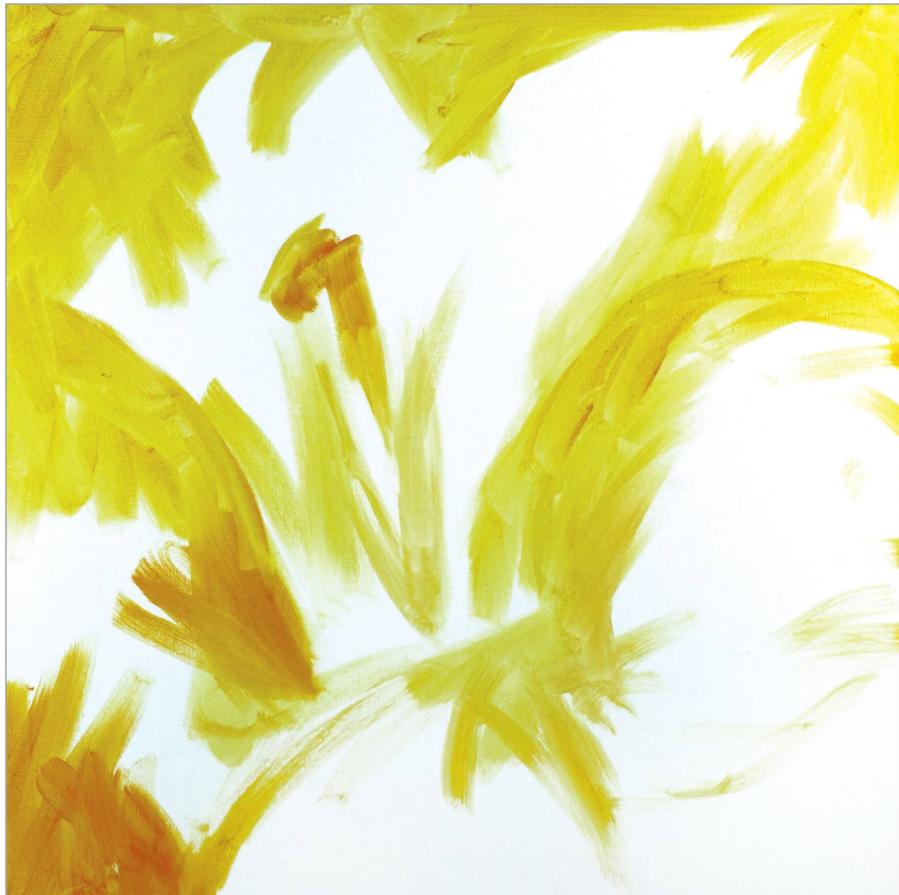
Oil Colors

cadmium barium orange • cerulean blue phthalo
green earth • lemon yellow • phthalo blue red shade

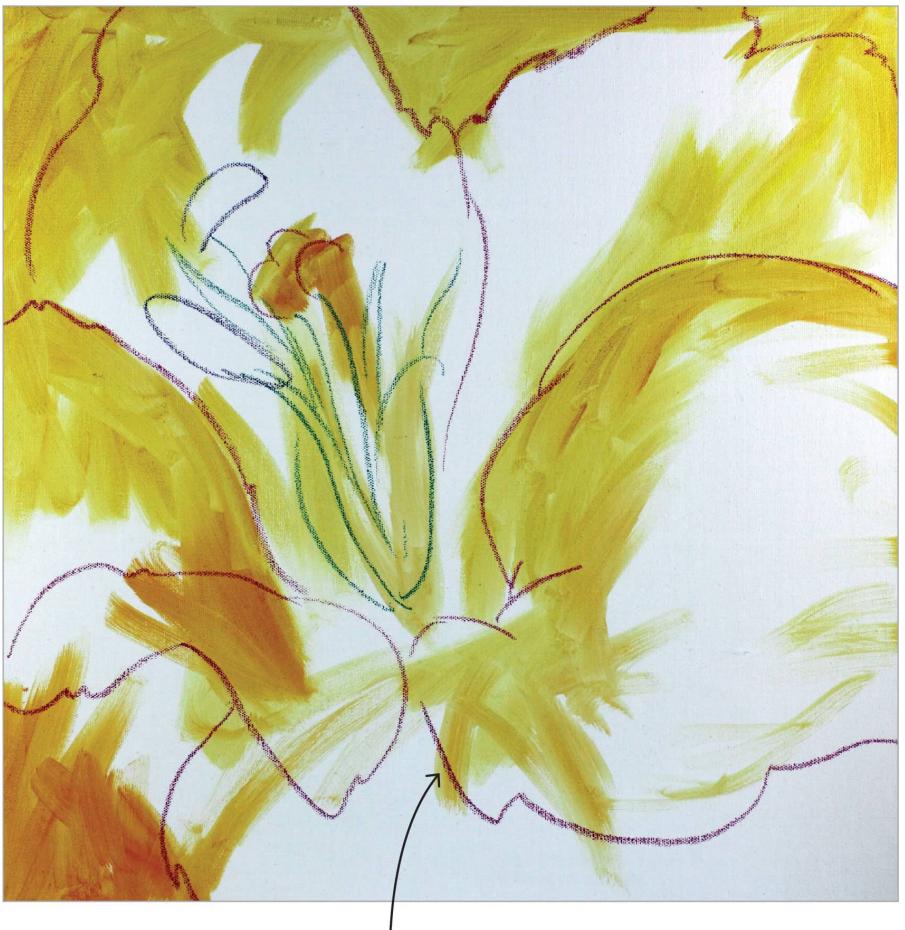
phthalo violet • red deep • red medium
sap green • titanium white • Winsor Newton blue
yellow deep • yellow green

Oil Pastels

deep red • kelly green • purple

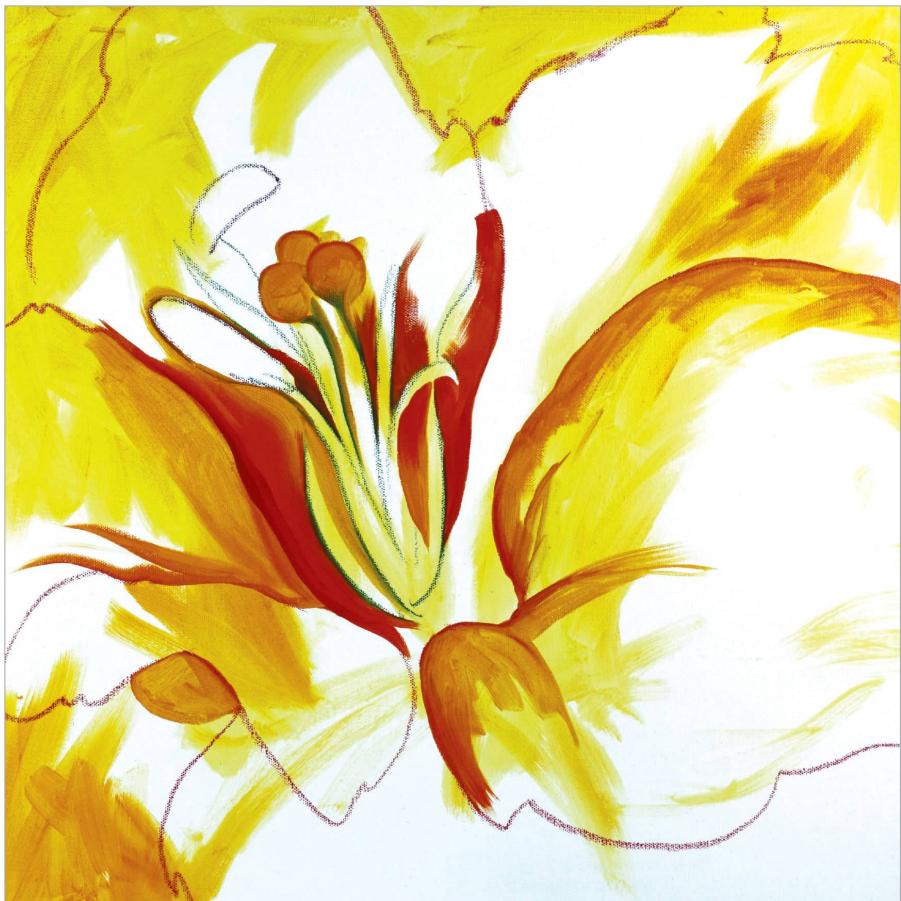


Cover your canvas with your medium mixture (see [here](#)). With the canvas still wet and working from dark to light, begin to block in the flower with paint combined with the medium mixture.



Using the reference sketch as your guide, lay down the petal and stamen outlines directly on the wet canvas using either oil pastel or the tip of a round brush dipped in paint.

Keep your lines loose and free of excessive detail.



Use a half-inch flat brush to begin painting in the larger areas of the flower. Work wet-into-wet and lightly blend color into the outlines you created. Allow the canvas to dry for about an hour before moving on to the next step.



After allowing your painting to dry for a bit, begin adding your reds to the outer petals, working from dark to light and blending each into the adjacent colors.

Use a soft flat brush to create crisp, defined edges where needed. Soften edges with a clean flat, dry brush.



Load a clean brush with your medium mixture, and then dip your brush into titanium white. Starting in the center of the petals, drag your brush up and out, blending into the reds and oranges.

TIP

To create depth in your painting, softly blend areas that are farthest away from the focal point of the composition.



Fill in the stamens with a quarter-inch flat sable brush. Keep the forms crisp to stay within your earlier guidelines. Blend the edges softly with a clean flat brush.

BLENDING DETAIL

White paint will seamlessly blend into deeper hues with a light touch. Wipe your brush clean as you pick up the darker hues. Clean your brush with clear turpentine and pat dry with a soft cotton cloth.





To further emphasize the direction of the light source, which appears to be hitting the flower from the upper right side, add deeper shades of phthalo violet, red deep, and red crimson to the outermost edges of the petals. This creates depth and dimension in the flower.



Using a half-inch flat brush, loosely lay in the darker background values. Soften any harsh edges in the background with a clean, dry brush, taking care to protect the edges of the petals. Finally, add various strokes of your blues and greens to the stamens, and finish by adding the dark spots to the petals.

APPLYING AN UNDERPAINTING

Although I drew a very rough sketch of my planned composition, my underpainting, which consists of almost all of the colors in my project palette, offered me a visual color reference, which proved extremely useful as I began to layer in more and more paint.



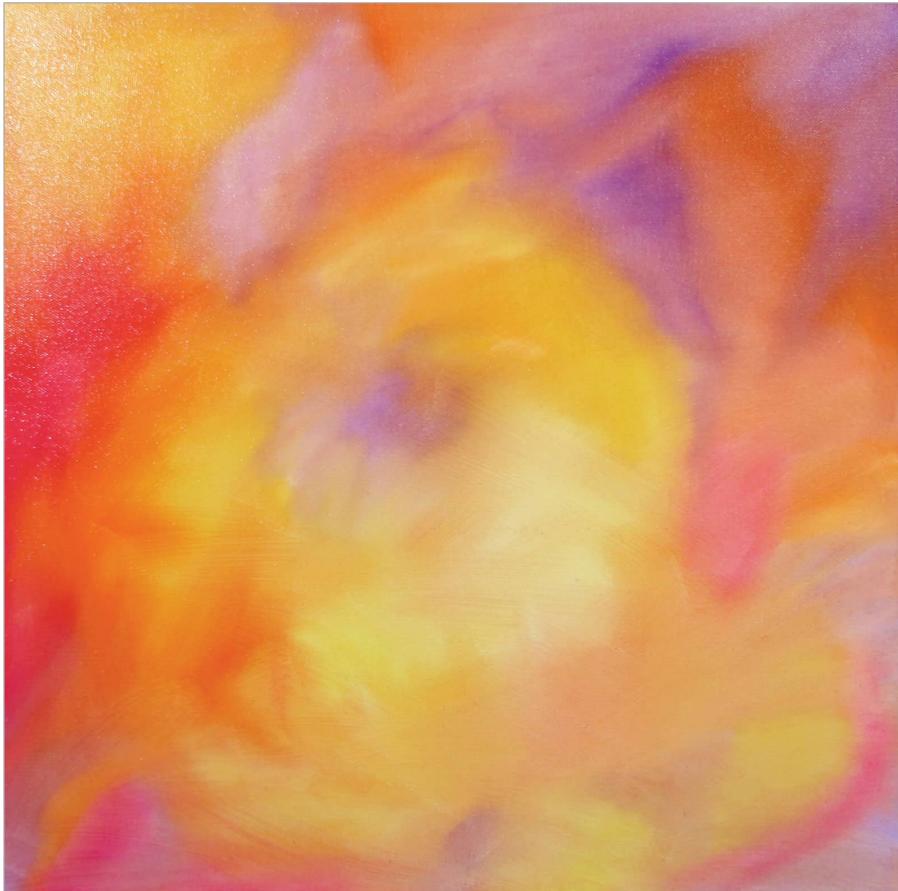
COLOR PALETTE

Oil Colors

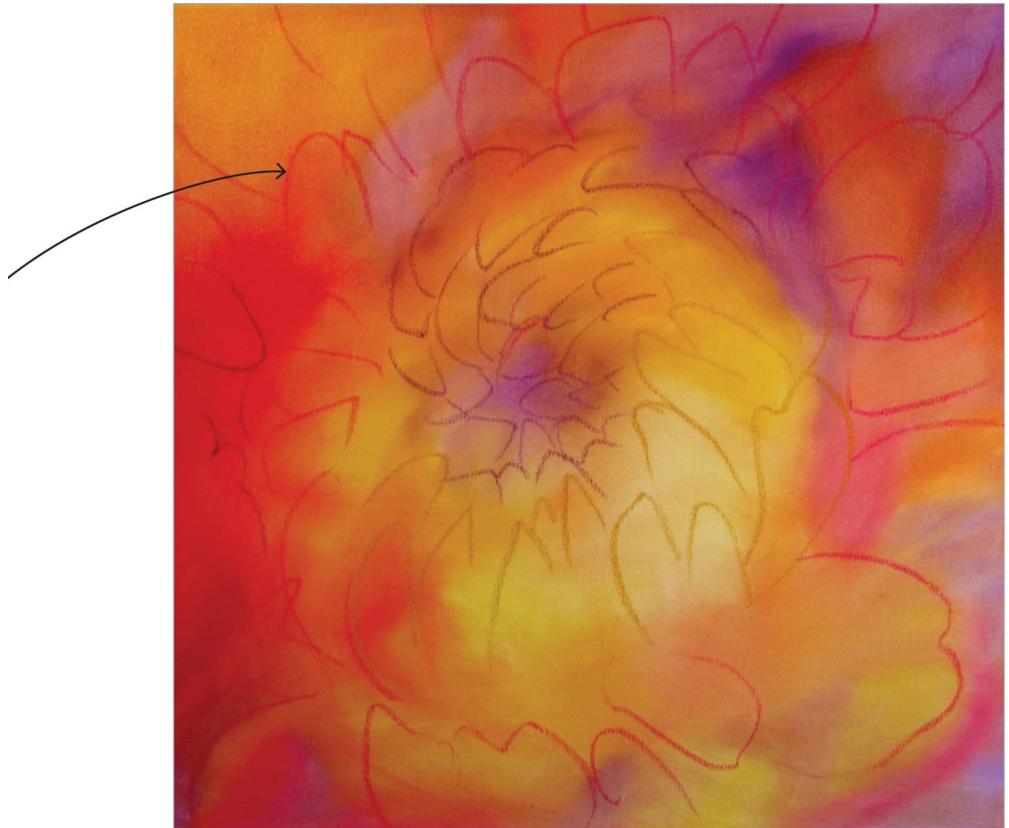
blue violet • cadmium orange
emerald green • lemon yellow
phthalo rose red • phthalo violet
red deep • red medium
titanium white • yellow ochre

Oil Pastels

rose red • violet • yellow ochre



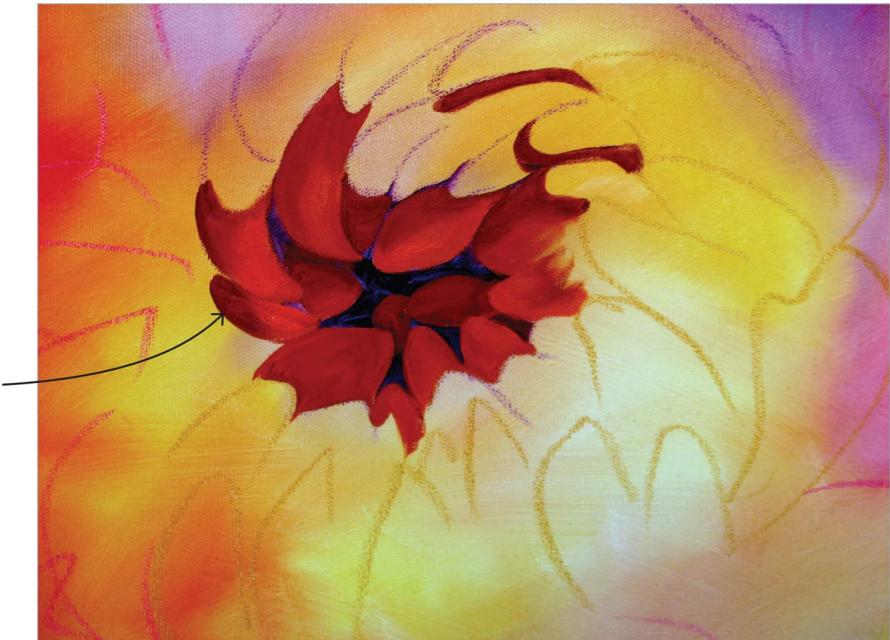
Lay down the underpainting. Load your brush with the darkest color first, plus medium. Using soft, broad brushstrokes, apply color to your support. Continue this process, working from dark to light, making sure to clean your brush between each new color. Once you have generously covered the canvas, let it dry for about 30 minutes. Then use a soft dry brush to gently blend the colors into each other.



Using quick, loose strokes, draw the dahlia petals using an oil pastel or the tip of a round paintbrush.



Begin filling in the dahlia's center using blue violet for the darkest shaded areas. For the tips of the muted petals, apply a mix of phthalo violet and cadmium orange.

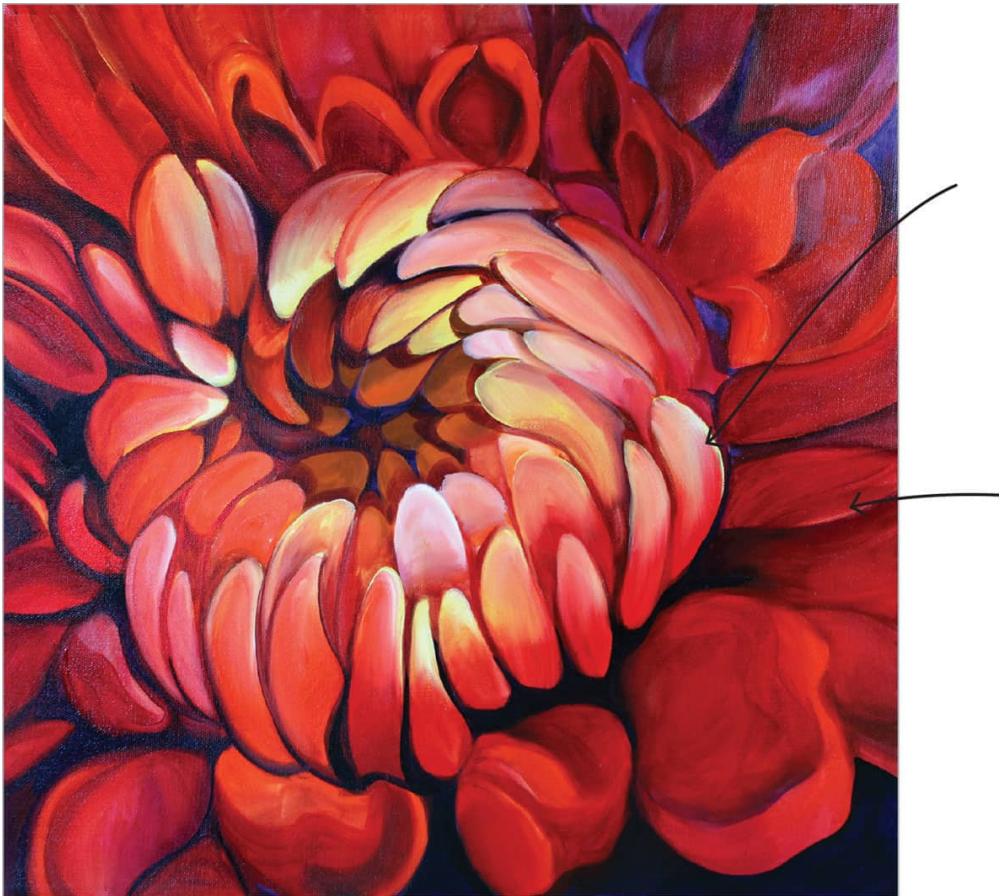


For the brighter red petals, mix a bit of liquin with phthalo rose red and apply it over the yellow underpainting. For the darker petal areas, including the shadows, add a bit of emerald green to your red mix.

As you're applying the color to the petals, make sure to stop and blend them occasionally with a flat sable brush.



Layer in the reds, making sure that your brushstrokes curve with the shape of the petals. Then go back over and fill in the deepest shadows with your emerald green/red mixture.



Add highlights to the petals in select areas.

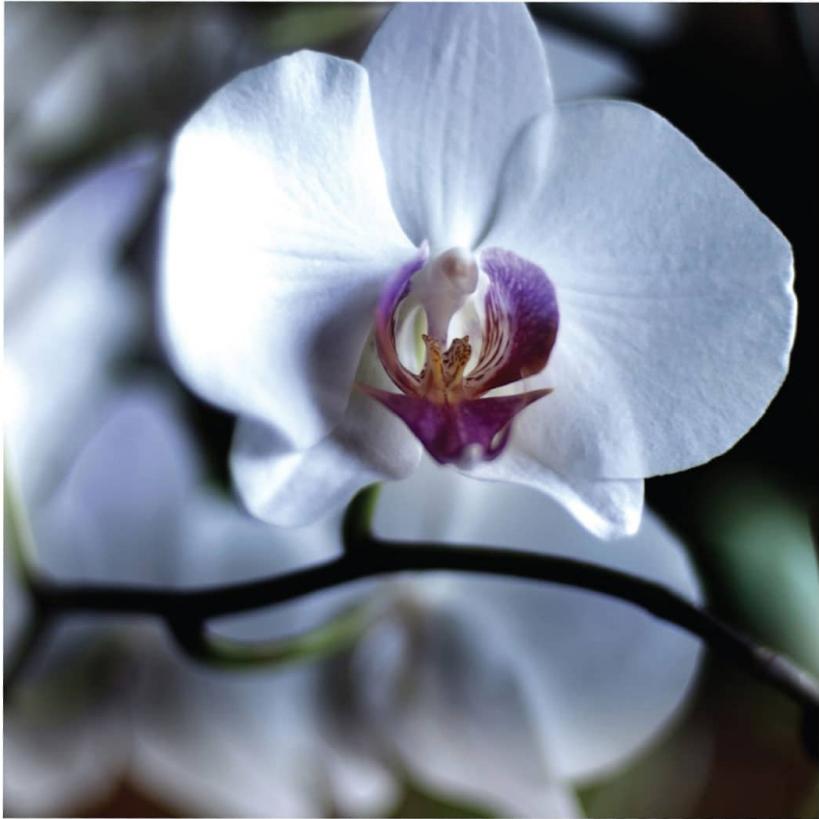
Softly blend the hues into the darker tones using a clean, dry brush. Enhance any shadows, edges, or darker areas with strokes of red deep or phthalo violet.



To finish, darken the deepest shadows with red deep and phthalo violet.

TAKING ARTISTIC LIBERTIES

My daughter, Sherry Fain, took this beautiful photograph in England. It is a classic orchid composition, but I took several liberties with color for my painting. I envisioned a close-up composition on a square canvas; then I drew several sketches before settling on one that I liked. I added more blues, reds, and oranges than are reflected in the photo, which contributed to a more abstract finished painting.



COLOR PALETTE

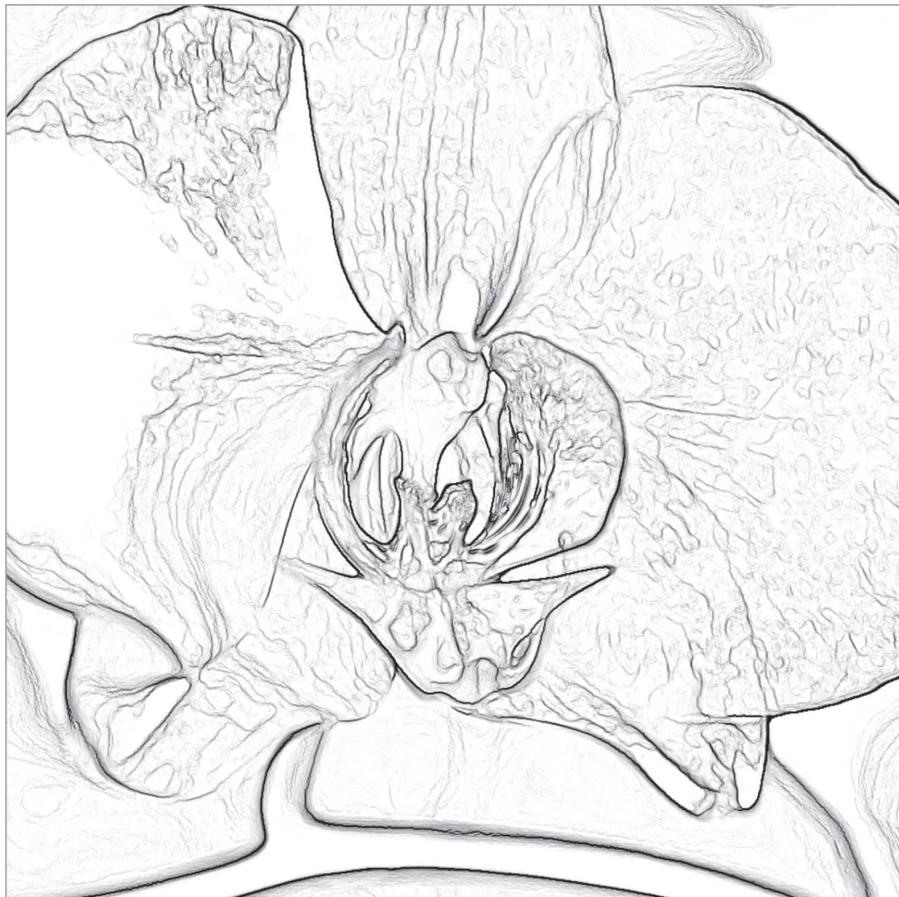
Oil Colors

alizarin crimson • burnt umber

cadmium barium orange • lemon yellow
manganese blue hue • phthalo rose red
phthalo violet • sap green
titanium white • ultramarine blue

Oil Pastels

cerulean blue • pink • violet



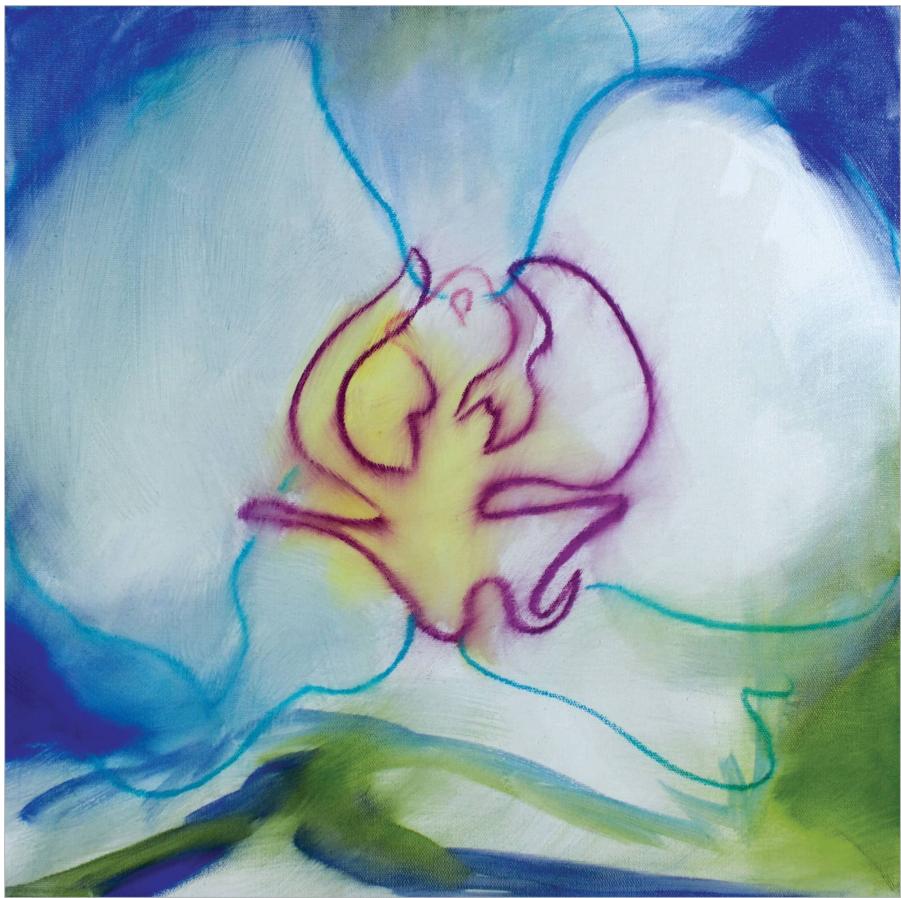


Add a bit of your medium mixture to each dab of color on your palette. Using broad brushstrokes, block in a rough outline of the orchid.

After blocking in the orchid, use a clean brush to apply the clear medium to the remaining areas of the canvas.



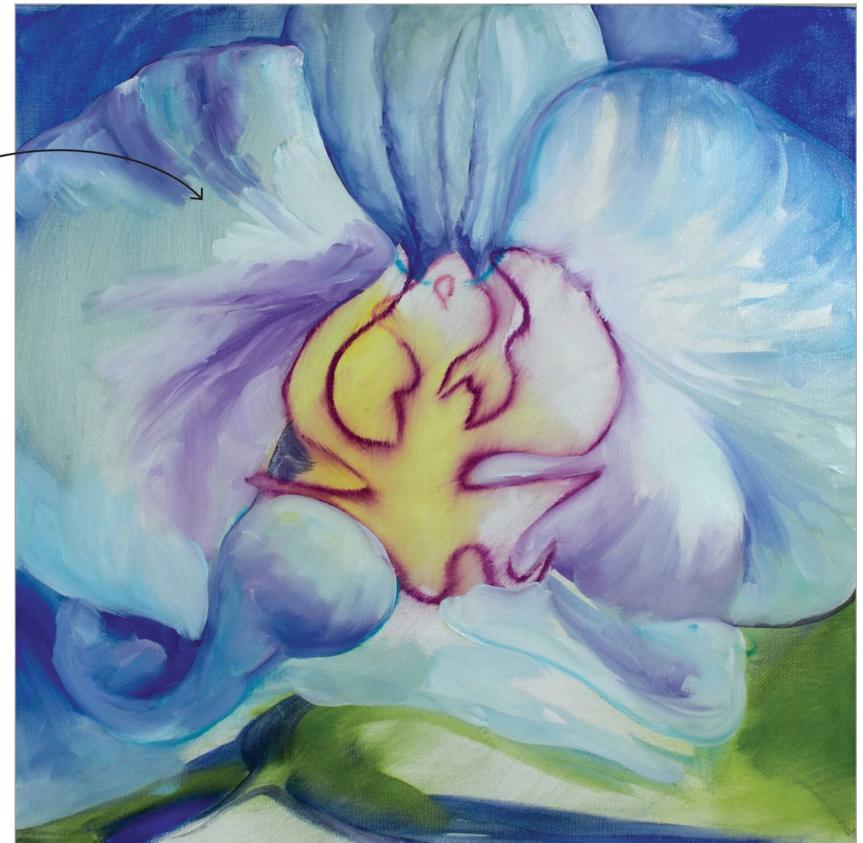
Using the sketch as a guide, lay in the outline of your composition using either oil pastels or the tip of a round brush dipped in paint. Keep your lines loose and continuous.



Using a clean, dry, one-inch flat brush, lightly blend the entire canvas, including the outlines. Wipe your brush with a cotton rag periodically to ensure that it stays clean and dry.

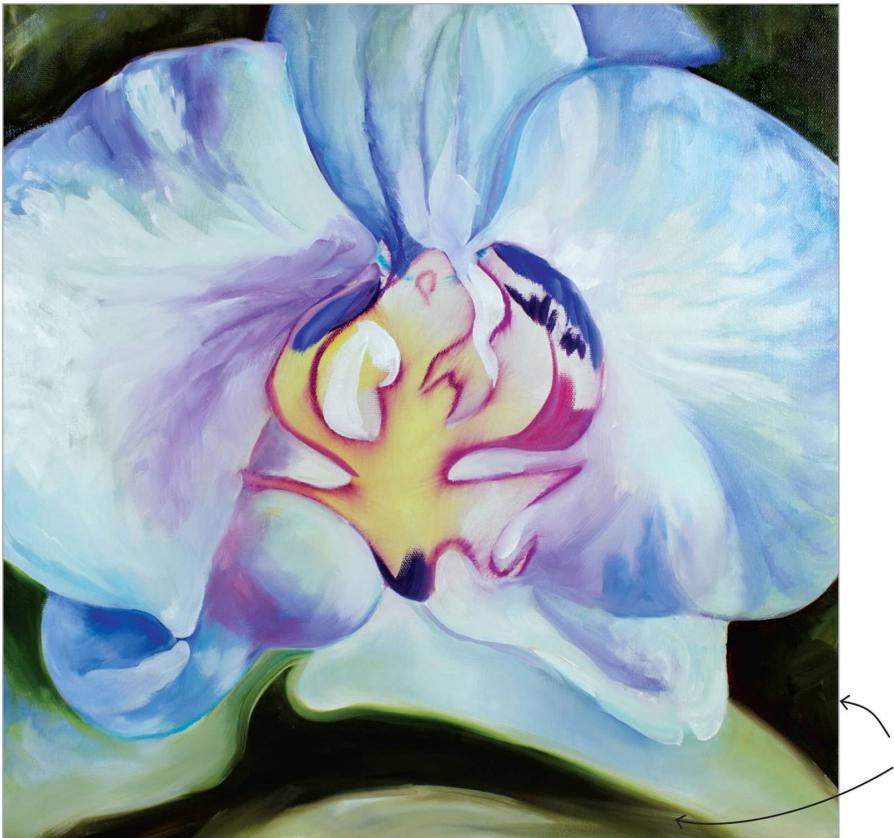


Begin to layer in the cooler hues after adding the medium mixture to each color you'll use. Working from dark to light, apply each color to the shadowed areas.



Load a half-inch flat brush with titanium white mixed with a touch of ultramarine blue. Begin laying in the base petal color, paying attention to the crisp edges of the blossom.

Softly blend the base petal color into the shadowed areas you laid down in the previous step.



Emphasize the outermost edges of the petals. Then, working from dark to light, add to the background to create more depth in the painting.

Feel free to experiment with the background areas. Play with different brushes and varied brush strokes.

CENTER DETAIL

Use a dabbing motion to apply the colors to the center, which also adds depth and texture.





Create your focal point—the heart of the orchid—keeping your brushstrokes simple and blending some together with a clean, soft brush. Finish by adding the details, such as the spots on the center petals. Sharpen or blend any other areas as needed.

CREATING TEXTURE

This photo hails from the Annual Sunflower Trails, a yearly event that is held near my home each July, wherein farmers cultivate sunflowers on their land along a 10-mile stretch of road in Gilliam, Louisiana. The result is a breathtaking display of stunning sunflowers that inspires locals and tourists alike.

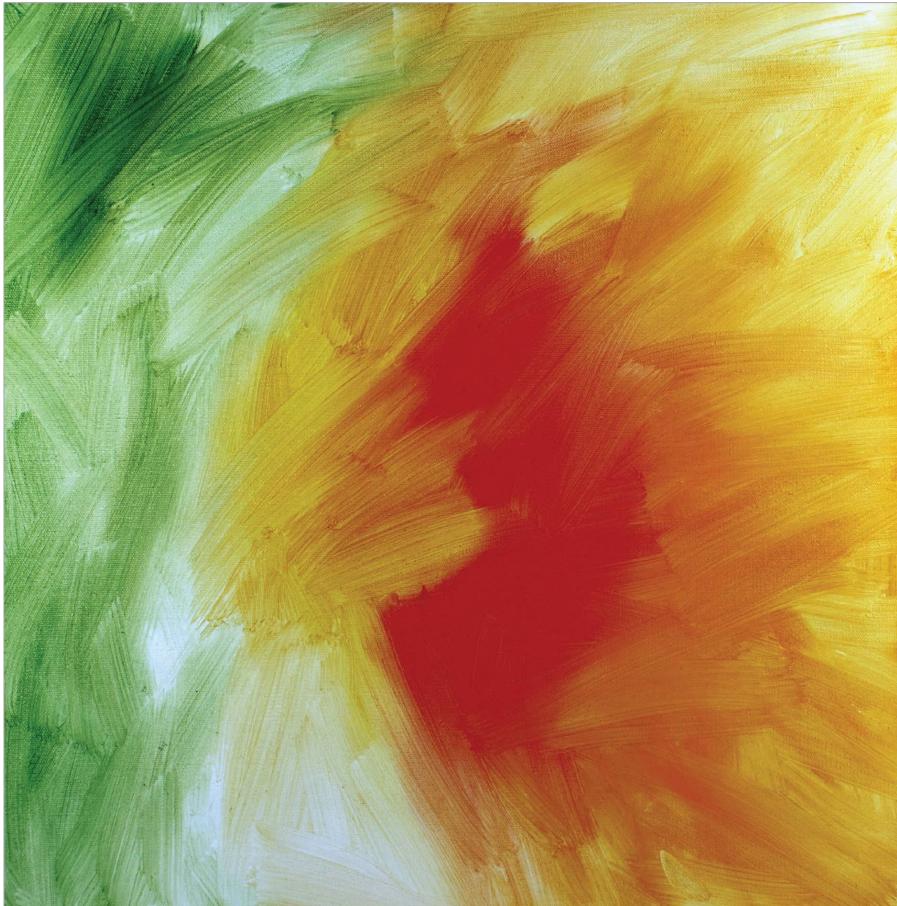


COLOR PALETTE

Oil Colors

burnt sienna • burnt umber
cadmium barium orange • deep yellow
lemon yellow • lime green • phthalo blue

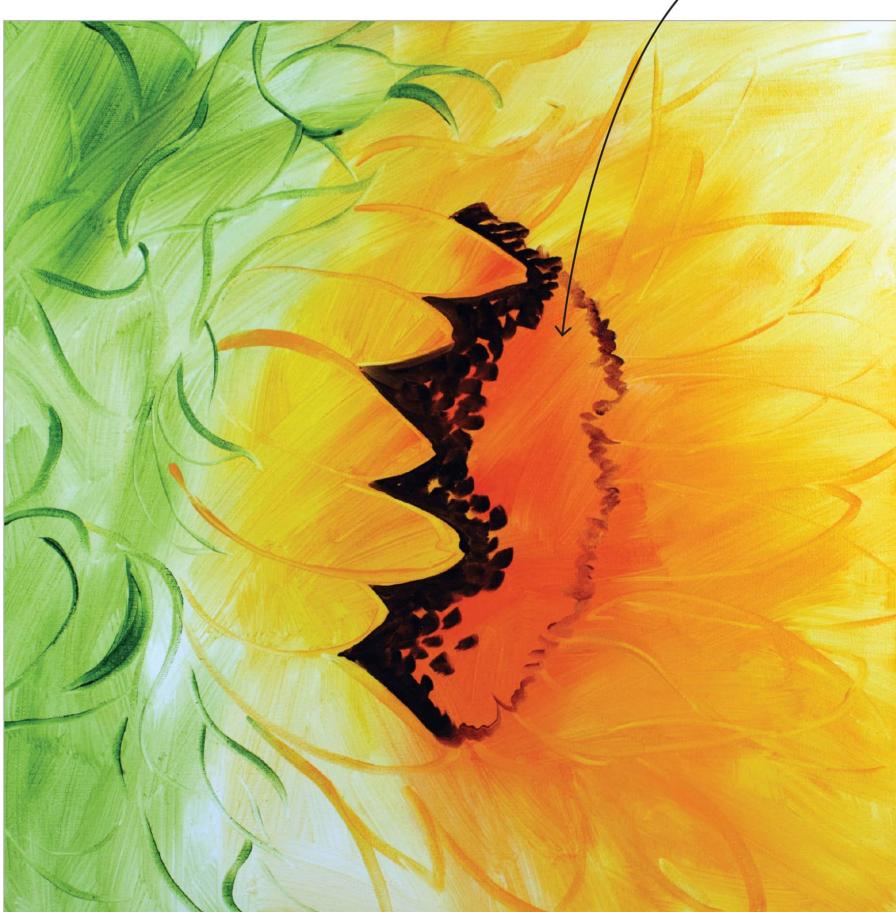
sap green • titanium white
violet • yellow ochre



Apply your underpainting, starting with the center of the sunflower. Use a clean dry brush to lightly blend strokes together.



Outline the foliage, petals, and center of the sunflower with a quarter-inch brush.

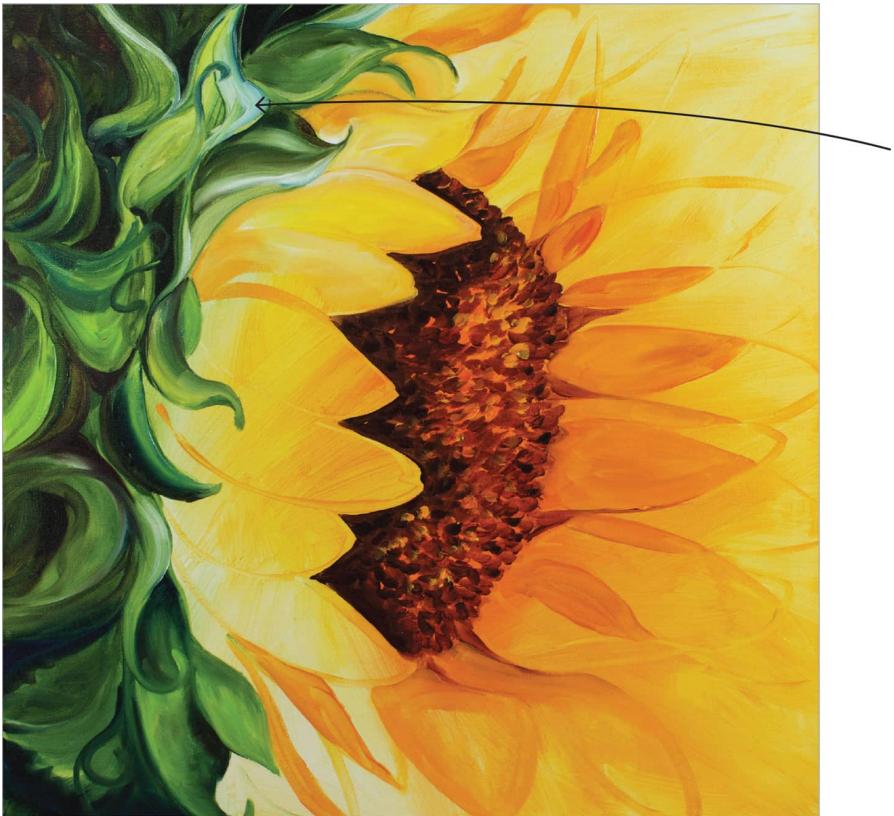


Using a half-inch flat brush with a crisp edge, begin filling in the center with burnt umber. Use short, multidirectional strokes to create clean edges between the petals. Also dab in several different colors to create depth and texture to the seeds.

As you move toward the center of the blossom, allow a bit of the orange underpainting to peek through.



Using a variety of brush sizes, continue to apply dabs of paint for the seeds. Then add color to some of the petals to the right of the seeds.



Begin defining the green petals and leaves, working from dark to light. Work wet-into-wet until you are happy with the color.

Add highlights with a clean brush dipped in titanium white.

TIP

When a highlight appears too bright or out of place, use a soft, one-inch sable or synthetic flat brush to softly blend the white into the adjacent hues.



Add highlights and lighter tones to further define the petals, leaves, and foliage. Then lightly blend all remaining colors on the petals. Use the sharp edge of the flat brush to define the edges of your petals and leaves. Finally, fill in the dark background, and then use a clean, dry brush to lightly soften the contrast between the petals and background.

ENHANCING BACKGROUNDS

The inspiration for this oil painting came from another photo taken by my daughter. This image has a stark black background. As I studied the blossom—the light filtering through the petals, the contrast in color range, and the flow of the shapes from left to right—I began to imagine ways that I might further enhance the background using dark, dramatic colors. The photo is abstract, so my painting is also abstract.

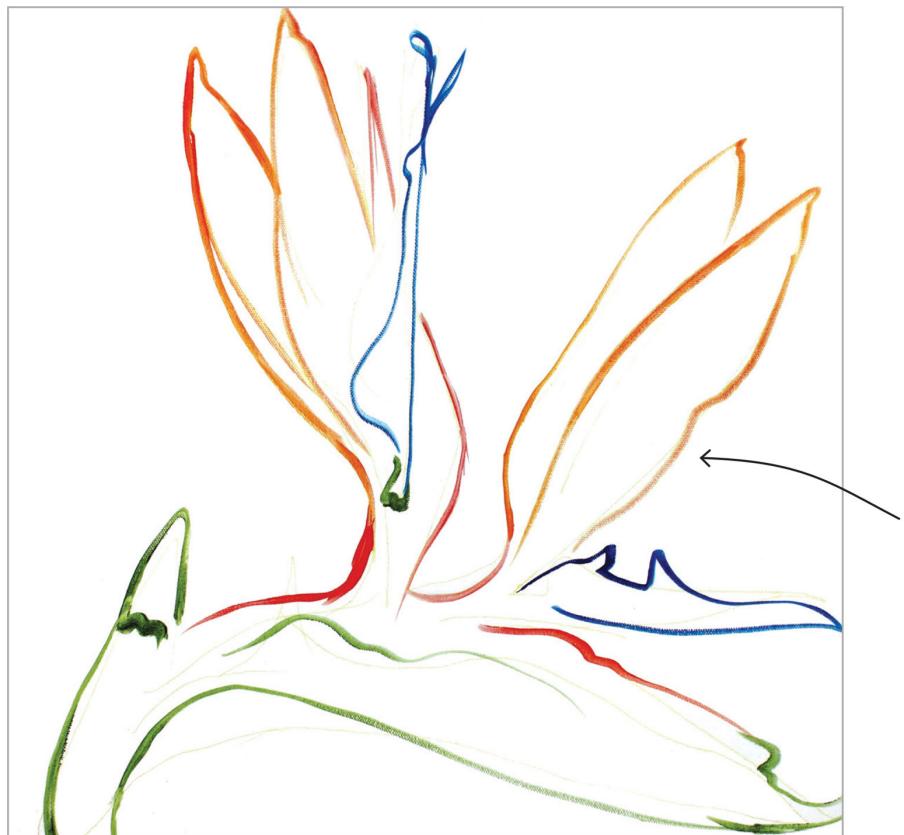


COLOR PALETTE

Oil Colors

bright red • burnt sienna • burnt umber

cadmium barium orange • deep yellow • lemon yellow
lime green • phthalo violet • sap green
titanium white • phthalo blue red shade
Winsor Newton violet



Dip a small flat brush in the medium mixture and paint. Begin painting the outlines.

Keep the shapes basic.



Begin filling in the yellows and oranges. Using a clean, dry brush, softly blend the colors to add depth to the petals.



Continue painting and blending as necessary.



Working the same way you have in the previous two steps, begin layering more color and blend where necessary. Continue to blend and refine the flower petals and stamen.

When painting the stem, alternate between sap green and lime green.



When you are satisfied with your flower, focus your attention on painting the background. Use a soft brush to begin applying paint to the background areas around the flower.

Turn your canvas upside down. This will make it easier to apply paint between the flower petals and maintain crisp edges. Continue to rotate your canvas as needed.



Blend and add more colors as you work your way around the canvas.

TIP

Instead of using black paint for the background, use darker pigments, such as burnt umber, phthalo red blue shade, and violet to give your background dimension.



Next, load your brush with titanium white. Using long, sweeping strokes, apply to the background and on and around the petals and stem. The goal is to exaggerate and emphasize your lines: Make some thick, some thin, and some variegated. If you'd like, you can softly blend them into the background. Finally, step back and view your painting. Add any finishing details, and then sign and date your work.

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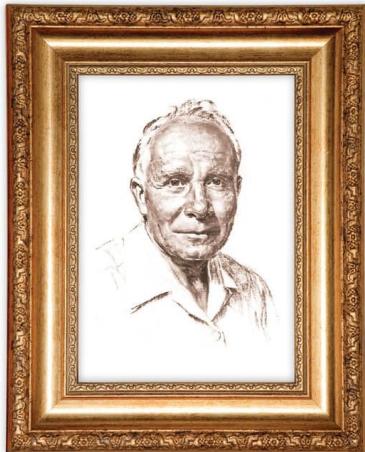
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About the Artist

MARCIA BALDWIN is an award-winning contemporary fine artist, born and raised in Louisiana. Throughout her childhood, Marcia's parents and grandmother encouraged her to explore her creativity through drawing, painting, sewing, and crafting. After earning a BA in fine art, she continued to take graduate courses at Louisiana State University. She has taught all different age levels, ranging from kindergarten through college and adult education. Currently, she is the owner of M. Baldwin Fine Art Originals, Inc. After more than 40 years of professional growth, Marcia continues to challenge herself creatively by approaching each new painting as a journey, an exploration, and a moment to discover something new and wonderful. It is her love of art—the passion she hopes to share with each person that sets eyes on her work—that drives her. Each day she is thankful for her talent and blessings from God. With the support of her family and her two grown daughters, Marcia will continue her journey as a lover of art.



Almost a century ago, Walter Foster—a well-known artist, instructor, and collector—began producing self-help art instruction books from his home in Laguna Beach, California. He originally wrote, illustrated, printed, bound, packaged, shipped, and distributed them himself. Although Walter passed away in 1981 at the age of 90, his legacy continues in a growing product line. Walter Foster Publishing now provides how-to books and kits to millions of enthusiastic artists worldwide who enjoy the rewards of learning to draw and paint. People who have never before picked up a paintbrush or drawing pencil have discovered their artistic talents through his easy-to-follow instruction books.

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